

Black Mount Primary School - Parent Council Meeting Minutes

5th October 2022

Present: Alistair Muirhead, Corrie Ward, Dan Brunton, Jenni Dods, Kirsten Jenkins, Nick Tucker, Trina Malone, Emma Ives, Carol Pennock (head teacher), Gemma Scott (teacher), Lindsay McLaughlin (teacher)

Apologies: *Katie Hobbs, Gregor Doyle, Wendy Kinloch, Jim Kinloch, Angela Murray, Alison Boyd, Tracey Pritchard*

**Parent Forum: term refers to all parents of any pupil in the school*

Parent Council funds:

- School holds £500 which is ring-fenced for the pagoda/gazebo build/installation
- Parent Council bank balance £1860.51
- The account is a treasurers account so does not allow for online payments to be made. These are currently only possible by telephone, in branch or by email to business banking. This is different to the guidance provided by the branch staff at Biggar so Trina will investigate further.
- Signatories to be removed:
 - William Macdonald
 - Gavin Cairns
 - Joan Highton
 - Christen McNeil
- Signatories to be added:
 - Emma Ives
 - Dan Brunton
- Trina will liaise with bank to have signatories above removed and added (approx 7-10 working days)
- Digital banking – Trina to arrange for Emma Ives and Dan Brunton to also have access.

Parent Council membership:

- Discussed current limit on parent council numbers of 15 parents and keenness of other members of parent forum to contribute
 - Agreed to amend constitution to state that we can 'review parent council numbers / members' at any meeting throughout the year, rather than annually. So members can be join/leave at any meeting - up to the max 15 parent members
 - We are all keen to make sure all parents of the school feel they can contribute to all activities - without having to feel they need to be on the parent council. We will work to make sure our activities are visible and there are lots of chances for everyone to be as involved as they would like to be

- All parents are welcome to parent council meetings, whether on parent council or not, however the cannot vote
- Coopted members (non-parent members up to a max 6 people)
 - Two places for teachers will be held for every meeting - the school will notify us who is attending which meeting
 - We are considering inviting coopted members including staff member from Black Mount Nursery and a local artist
 - Add co-opted members to the agenda for January meeting

Working Groups:

- We discussed setting up working groups to devolve decision-making amongst the parent council and a chance for other parents in the wider parent-forum to contribute to specific themes
- Working groups agreed as:
 - **Outside Space** (Jenni)
 - **Fundraising** (TBA)
 - **Social** (Kirsten)
- Each working group will have a responsible person(s) - see names in brackets above

Outside space:

- We agreed to create a working group for the outdoor space to be led by Jenni Dods, all parents are invited to contribute to any aspect
- Parent council toured the outdoor space whilst there was still light. Discussed the existing plans for layout and new items - a rough sketch is available if anyone would like
- Outdoor space plans include:
 - BACK AREA BEHIND MUGGA PITCH: sensory music area, polytunnel, raised beds, outdoor classroom, central 'theatre' area, willow tunnel (in-progress), pagoda, mud kitchen, water tap, hedging against top field % 270 whips secured from Scottish Woodlands.
 - FRONT PLAYGROUND: possibilities discussed including climbing frame, trim trail, outdoor storage box with sports equipment like balls/racquets etc to be freely available for community use, push button lighting for mugga pitch
- Issues flagged: any poisonous plants in playground need removed
- Lindsay McLaughlin introduced us to the work of the pupil-led sustainability group and what they had been working on, and their plans for the outdoor space. The group has 6 members and they are keen to see the following in the school:
 - *Mud kitchen*
 - *Pagoda*
 - *Bird boxes*
 - *Fruit trees / fruit bushes*
 - *Garden jobs/tasks*
 - *Reducing the electricity consumption of the school*
 - *Solar panels*
 - *Bringing in recyclables to create junk models*

- Pagoda/Gazebo:
 - Alistair will lead on design/development/installation
 - Alistair to seek cost price materials from McVeigh Parker (or if unavailable Hewitts)
 - All present agreed he could proceed without further parent council approval as long as costs remain under £2000.
 - Alistair will work with kids on the design and build wherever possible and in liaison with school staff
 - The parent council were keen that this activity should progress asap - with this in mind Alistair agreed to visit school on 10/10/22 to gather kids input for design
 - There is the intention to host a 'grand opening' for the completed pagoda/gazebo to be student-led
- Elsrickle Community Playpark:
 - The village doesn't have one, there is an agreement in place that once the new houses are built there will be one added there, but timeline is unknown. There was discussion about making more of the school grounds with play equipment for school and community use
- Outdoor storage box with sports equipment for playground use and community use (out of hours)
 - Carol to draft application for this and send to Kirsten and Corrie
 - Carol will share info on Auchengray purchase of the same
- Following discussion of student-led sustainability group we talked more about solar panels:
 - The parent council would like to fundraise for solar panels to be installed on the ground on the back wall of the car park, this would generate electricity for the school
 - Carol will investigate whether the parent council are allowed to install these
 - Dan has started a conversation with The National Lottery Fund to see if this would be something they would fund
 - Emma has a conversation set up with SSE around wind farm money for clyde valley to see if we are in their target regions

Fundraising:

- Keen for wider contributions from parent forum for ideas around fundraising, Emma to arrange a survey to be shared with parent forum to gather ideas
- Ideas for future fundraising discussed briefly:
 - Previously successful bid for Loaningdale Trust in Lanark
 - Black Mount Community Council Funding
 - Carol to draft an application and a member of the parent council to submit
 - Parents can individually apply to BM Council Council for funds / projects
 - Community Kitchen within school can be used when needed
 - Supermarket fundraising support: tesco blue tokens,coop, bag packing events etc

- Previous activities have included: beetle drive (raised £118), film night (raised £309), Duck race (raised around £800), christmas show (raised £100)
 - We do not have copies of expenditure so unsure what percentage of income was profit
- Carol will add a reminder in the next newsletter about how easy-fundraising works (in advance of the christmas holidays) - basically ways parents can raise funds without doing too much; also to remind parents about the clothing bank in Elsrickle that raises funds for school
- Consider joint ventures with school + community council for fundraising (Auchengray school + local What If group successfully bid for funds for lights on their mugga pitch)
- Fundraising group may want to draw up a calendar of potential events / opportunities

Social:

- Whilst discussing events and fundraising activities it was agreed that some events should be earmarked as key fundraisers whilst others are opportunities for social engagement within the school community. There are smaller opportunities within these for fundraising but the primary objective should be socially-driven.
- BEETLE DRIVE: Agreed that we would like one social event before christmas, a beetle drive, which will be on a friday evening in November
 - Emma to liaise with parent council for volunteer helpers on either 11/18/25 Nov
 - Event will run 6.30pm - 9.30pm, date to be agreed w/b 10/10/22
 - Suggested food for beetle drive to include: casserole, chilli, (soup tbc), lasagne
 - Kids Enterprise Committee to lead on bake sale on night as part of fundraising efforts
 - School office will arrange tickets (which will be free), and manage numbers (capacity is 80) - parents and children will be prioritised and then opened up to wider family
 - Dorothy and Lorna will prepare children during school time for Beetle Drive game
- School arranging a Christmas Show:
 - Parent council support needed for hamper raffle, donation gathering and teas/coffees
- Plans for a film night in Biggar Corn Exchange in February
 - Carol to ask Avril to check availability to get a friday night held
 - In the past there have been efforts to source free/subsidised water/snacks etc; ticketed event and ice creams could cover costs
- Gala day:
 - Parent council agreed that we should discuss a budget for costs for the Biggar Gala day float going forward, previously these costs were paid for by individuals
 - Jenni and Carrie Allison estimate costs may be around £200
 - Carrie has agreed to host the float trailer at hers during decoration time (May/June 2023) and Robert Campbell at Lammerlaw has agreed to store the trailer through the 2022-23 winter to protect it from the elements.

- Parent forum survey to include - ideas for gala day theme for 2023

School sports clubs:

- Discussion around parents/others who were willing and able to contribute time to offer an after school club (3.15-4.15pm) once a week for a 6 week block (3 weeks for the wee class, then 3 weeks for the big class)
 - In the past they have had Tennis, Rugby and dance
 - Any equipment needed can be loaned through the active-schools programme
 - Corrie had gone on the 'help your school training' to find out more
 - Trina to ask Paul if he will run a football one
 - Alistair suggested Carpet bowls on Thursday and Carol will follow up to book hall across road
 - Carol will add dates of any agreed sessions to the calendar on the schools app

Catchment area:

- There was a lengthy discussion about adding Newbigging to the catchment area for Black Mount
 - Trina updated on where the discussion with council had gotten to pre-covid
 - School team are in support of this change
 - Carol confirmed the max capacity for the school is 50 students, current role is 42, currently 36% of students are through out-of-catchment placing requests
 - Key contact Mr Hinshelwood at council would need to see support from parents, parent council, school and local councillors
 - Benefits included reducing environmental/cost impact of car-travel to school for those in Newbigging through access to school transport
 - Newbigging sits in Black Mount parish and the majority of local children already attend the school through placement requests
 - Alistair and Nick will raise this at the community council to add their support
 - Emma to invite councillors to next meeting (Nov) to raise issue and ask for their support
 - Carol to compile number of pupils / percentage of school who are located in Newbigging
 - Emma to send letter from parent council to Mr Hinshelwood about this issue and cc BM Community Council
 - Parent council to provide a generic template with parent forum for other who would like to lend their support to this agenda item

Next meeting:

- Date/time: Wednesday 2nd November 2022, 6.30pm start
- Sustainability group led by pupils will be invited to present at the beginning of the meeting (6.30-7)
- Local councillors invited to the meeting from 6.30pm